

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4807
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 3019

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PINS, DR
SUBJECT: ANTONIO GUZMAN REQUESTS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT

1. DURING CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFFS (SEPTTEL), ANTONIO GUZMAN SAID THAT U.S. FRIENDS HAVE URGED HIM TO MAKE A TRIP TO WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK AS PRESIDENT-ELECT. PURPOSE OF THE TRIP WOULD BE TO GET TO KNOW U.S. GOVERNMENT, CONGRESSIONAL AND BUSINESS LEADERS. HE SAID HE IS QUITE PREPARED TO MAKE SUCH A VISIT, BUT ONLY IF PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD RECEIVE HIM, EVEN FOR ONLY A SHORT CALL. OTHERWISE HE WOULD LET SOMEONE ELSE LEAD A DELEGATION TO THE U.S., POSSIBLY HIS VICE-PRESIDENTIAL RUNNING MATE JACOBO MAJLUTA. GUZMAN THOUGHT A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT WOULD HAVE POSITIVE AND STABILIZING EFFECT ON LOCAL SITUATION PRIOR TO AUGUST 16 INAUGURATION. HE WOULD BE WILLING TO MAKE VISIT AT ANY TIME CONVENIENT TO PRESIDENT.

2. COMMENT: EMBASSY INTERPRETS APPROACH AS FORMAL REQUEST BY GUZMAN. WE SEE BOTH PROS AND CONS TO SUCH A CALL BY GUZMAN ON THE PRESIDENT. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, DESPITE ALL OUTWARD SIGNS THAT THE
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TURNING OVER OF POWER TO THE PRD HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY PRESIDENT BALAGUE'S FOLLOWERS AND THE MILITARY, GUZMAN CLEARLY IS STILL CONCERNED THAT SOMETHING COULD HAPPEN BEFORE AUGUST 16. HE APPARENTLY SEES A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AS A POWERFUL, SYMBOLIC GESTURE THAT THE USG STANDS FULLY BEHIND THE NEWLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT. EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY SUCH AS MEETING, IN HIS

VIEW, WOULD SERVE AS A RESTRAINING FORCE ON ELEMENTS, PARTICULARLY WITHIN THE MILITARY, WHICH MIGHT CONTEMPLATE SOME UNCONSTITUTIONAL ACT TO PREVENT THE PRD FROM COMING TO POWER.

3. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT GUZMAN, IN SEEKING SUCH A MEETING, IS DRAWING FROM HISTORY, NAMELY FORMER PRESIDENT JUAN BOSCH'S PRE-INAUGURAL CALL ON PRESIDENT KENNEDY.

4. GUZMAN HAS SHOWN CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN QUICKLY ENTERING INTO A DIALOGUE WITH THE U.S. ECONOMIC BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL COMMUNITY (HE HAS ALREADY BEGUN TALKING TO THE DOMINICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY) TO ASSURE THEM OF THE MODERATE NATURE OF PRD ECONOMIC GOALS AND TO ASK THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND CONFIDENCE IN THE NEXT GOVERNMENT. HE APPARENTLY FEELS, HOWEVER, THAT TO MAKE A TRIP TO THE U.S. AND NOT TO BE RECEIVED BY THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE INTERPRETED IN THE DR AS A LACK OF INTEREST OR SUPPORT, AND HE SEEMINGLY IS NOT WILLING TO RISK APPEARING TO HAVE BEEN IGNORED OR REJECTED.

5. THE U.S. IS AND WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO BE THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT EXTERNAL INFLUENCE ON INTERNAL DOMINICAN AFFAIRS. PRESIDENT BALAGUER HIMSELF SKILLFULLY EXPLOITED HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH US FOR INTERNAL POLITICAL PURPOSES, PARTICULARLY AFTER HIS SEPTEMBER CONFIDENTIAL

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1977 CALL ON PRESIDENT CARTER. GUZMAN APPARENTLY WOULD LIKE TO USE THAT SAME MAGIC IN SUPPORT OF HIS OWN OBJECTIVES, THE PRINCIPAL OF WHICH IS TO HELP INSURE POLITICAL STABILITY BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER AUGUST 16 WHEN A PRD ADMINISTRATION WILL FACE NOT ONLY POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES BUT LARGE INHERITED ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AS WELL.

6. ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE, THE PRD HAS ALREADY BEEN ACCUSED BY ITS FOES OF HAVING INVITED FOREIGN INTERVENTIONISM INTO INTERNAL DOMINICAN AFFAIRS, AND RELYING ON FOREIGN TIES FOR SUPPORT DURING THE CAMPAIGN AND AFTER THE MILITARY INTERVENED IN THE ELECTIONS. A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER WILL BE USED BY THE PRD'S DETRACTORS, AND OUR OWN, HERE AND ELSEWHERE IN LATIN AMERICA, AS "PROOF" THAT THE GUZMAN GOVERNMENT WILL BE U.S. DOMINATED. THIS CRITICISM WILL COME NOT ONLY FROM THE LEFT BUT ALSO THE "NEW NATIONALISTS" OF THE RIGHT. THE IMAGERY PROJECTED BY GUZMAN/CARTER MEETING COULD ALSO RAISE FALSE EXPECTATIONS WITHIN THE DR AS TO THE DEGREE OF ECONOMIC SUPPORT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION CAN EXPECT FROM THE USG IN THE FUTURE, INCLUDING ACTIONS ON SUGAR, DEBTS, AID, TRADE, ETC.

FINALLY, IT COULD BE
ARGUED THAT A GUZMAN VISIT TO WASHINGTON WOULD BE MORE
USEFUL IN ITS SUBSTANTIVE - AND PERHAPS EVEN IN ITS
PRESENTATIONAL - ASPECTS SOMETIME AFTER HE TAKES OFFICE.

7. THE POLITICAL BENEFITS AND RISKS OF A U.S. VISIT
AT THIS TIME WERE PRESUMABLY WEIGHED BY GUZMAN BEFORE
HE MADE HIS REQUEST, THOUGH HIS BASIC MOTIVATION - TO
RECEIVE MORAL SUPPORT AGAINST THE DR MILITARY PRIOR TO
INAUGURATION - STEMS FROM WHAT APPEARS TO US TO BE A
SOMEWHAT EXAGGERATED VIEW OF CURRENT INTENTIONS OF
DR MILITARY. IN ANY EVENT, IT MUST BE STRESSED THAT HIS
GAME PLANS ARE BASED ON HAVING A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN WITH
PRESIDENT CARTER. OTHER OBJECTIVES OF THE VISIT COULD
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PRESUMABLY BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH VISITS BY OTHER
MEMBERS OF THE PRD TEAM.
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